

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 CTME-00 EB-08 MMO-04 SS-15

NSC-05 TRSE-00 ITC-01 STR-07 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 /067 W

-----008546 240932Z /15

R 232342Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8506

UNCLAS MEXICO 03217

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, XB, XM, XT, MX

SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARIAL TASK FORCE ON U.S. FOOTWEAR
INDUSTRY-MARKET RESEARCH REQUEST

REF: STATE 43952

1. DURING PAST YEAR EMBASSY HAS REPORTED CONTINUING
GOM SHIFT FROM IMPORT
SYSTEM BASED ON PRIOR IMPORT
LICENSING AND/OR QUOTAS TO ONE BASED ON TARIFFS. RE
FOOTWEAR, HOWEVER, A CHECK WITH CHIEF OF COMMERCE
SECRETARIAT'S TARIFF SECTION CONFIRMED THAT FOOTWEAR
IMPORTS HAVE NOT RPT NOT BEEN LIBERALIZED, AND REMAIN
SUBJECT TO PRIOR IMPORT LICENSE REQUIREMENTS. FURTHER-
MORE, THIS OFFICIAL INFORMED EMBASSY THAT LICENSES FOR
IMPORTS OF FOOTWEAR INTO MEXICO WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE
ISSUED.

2. EMBASSY ALSO CHECKED WITH LOCAL SHOE INDUSTRY SOURCE,
WHO EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT GOM WOULD LIBERALIZE FOOTWEAR
IMPORTS. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, MEXICAN FOOTWEAR
INDUSTRY FACING NUMBER OF SERIOUS PROBLEMS, INCLUDING
HIGH COSTS OF LABOR AND RAW MATERIALS (SOME OF WHICH,
E.G., HIDES AND SKINS, MUST BE IMPORTED); LABOR PROBLEMS;
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AND LOSS OF EXPORT MARKETS DUE TO INROADS OF ARGENTINE,
BRAZILIAN AND SPANISH FOOTWEAR IN THIRD COUNTRIES. AS A
RESULT, MANY MEXICAN FOOTWEAR COMPANIES, MAINLY SMALLER
ONES, HAVE GONE BANKRUPT IN RECENT YEARS AND THERE IS
HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE INDUSTRY. SITUATION IS FURTHER
COMPLICATED BY FACT THAT A SUBSTANTIAL PART (ESTIMATED AT
APPROXIMATELY 30 PERCENT) OF MEXICO'S FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY

IS CONCENTRATED IN LEON, STATE OF GUANAJUATO, ONE OF MEXICO'S ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED REGIONS.

3. GIVEN GOM RESTRICTIONS AGAINST FOOTWEAR IMPORTS, EMBASSY BELIEVES RESEARCH REQUEST CONTAINED REFTTEL INAPPLICABLE IN CASE OF MEXICO. HOWEVER, IN UNLIKELY EVENT GOM MOVES IN FUTURE TO LIBERALIZE FOOTWEAR IMPORTS, EMBASSY WILL INFORM DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY IN ORDER THAT WASHINGTON MAY DECIDE WHETHER TO PROCEED WITH RESEARCH STUDY, WHICH IN ALL LIKELIHOOD WOULD HAVE TO BE CONTRACTED OUT.

4. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING CONFIRMATION THAT RESEARCH STUDY REQUESTED REFTTEL IS NOT REQUIRED OF MEXICO AT THIS TIME. THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MEXICO03217
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780085-1093
Format: TEL
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780223/aaaaaswe.tel
Line Count: 77
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e95d9ed1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION COME
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 43952
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3507044
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNDER SECRETARIAL TASK FORCE ON U.S. FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY-MARKET RESEARCH REQUEST
TAGS: BEXP, XB, XM, XT, MX
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e95d9ed1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014